

# THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



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# The Merry-Go-Round

SHIRLE DODDS

*Rhetoric II, Theme 12, 1942-1943*

NO ONE COULD REMEMBER JUST WHO HAD FIRST introduced this couple into "the crowd." Suddenly, there they were—going to all the parties, entertaining in their turn, and offering a new, refreshing outlook on life. Although no one understood them, everyone sought the company of Tillie and Michael, who, in passing by, proved that people are quick to acclaim, quick to imitate, and quick to forget.

Michael was a short, dark man, with the egotistical walk of a pigeon. Tillie was a large, blondish woman, who somehow managed to convey to you her own impression that she was quite good looking. They were both extremely friendly people, and after a few cocktails, rather talkative.

Although Tillie and Michael had backgrounds as different as day and night, their marriage was completely happy. Tillie was born in Arkansas, and laughingly, but with a touch of pride, talked of her "hillbilly" ancestry. She had many amusing stories, which she related upon the slightest encouragement, about her childhood and home in the hill country. There was one, in particular, that always brought a laugh, of how she had stolen a stay from her mother's most valued possession, a corset, to use as a fishin' pole, and of the punishment that resulted. To accent her stories, Tillie would sing coarse "hillbilly" songs. An ambitious girl, she had put herself through nursing school, but it was not until her later life that she had met Michael.

Michael was born in Italy. He was orphaned as a child and came to America, where he worked as a stable boy on a large estate in Virginia. The owner of the estate, a maiden lady of many years, took a liking to the young Michael. She adopted him, sent him to a good prep school, and then on to Harvard, where he earned his degree. Michael was gifted with a beautiful voice, and would have sung in opera, had it not been for his slight stature.

Perhaps Tillie's and Michael's temperaments, which were very similar, were what drew them and held them together. They were both true individualists. They lived according to their own beliefs and desires, ignoring conventions. Tillie would think nothing of wearing a play suit or slacks to an afternoon bridge luncheon. Michael was often dangerously frank in expressing his opinions. If something displeased him, he did not hesitate to say that it did. Yet their very individuality was responsible for the attraction and interest they held for others.

They were both of a rather artistic temperament. Michael sang beautifully, and wrote poetry and music. When that small man stood in someone's living room, and boomed out his favorite "Road to Mandalay," he held

his entire audience spellbound, and he himself seemed actually to grow in inches. Tillie, in her own clever way, composed and recited original pieces. Sometimes she and her husband seemed almost to be contending with each other for the acclaim of their audience—Tillie, in her coarse, throaty, mocking poems, and Michael, in his magnificent, ringing tones.

No matter what the outside world might think or do, these two were completely happy in themselves. Financially, they were either on the top or on the rock bottom, hitting no medium. If they were wealthy, Tillie went on extravagant shopping expeditions. It was on one of these tours that she purchased a Chinese pajama outfit of brilliant orange and green, which she wore whenever it struck her fancy. Michael worked when and if he pleased, but they seemed equally happy in poverty or in wealth.

Although people sometimes criticized them for defying conventions, their happy, cheerful dispositions made them welcome any place. Although they frequently "dropped in" and stayed for dinner on four consecutive nights, on the fifth night there would still be a place for them.

They both seemed to have a flare for making life exciting and interesting. They gave an impression of living on the luxuries of life, ignoring the necessities. If there was not even bread to eat, Tillie would still be wearing her expensive perfumes.

Tillie and Michael had a great, although momentary, influence on the lives of their friends. They were always sought after for parties, for because of their talent for entertainment, any party with them as guests was successful. Everyone laughed at Tillie and Michael, accepting them as they appeared, and enjoyed living because their own love of life and its adventures was stimulated.

Strangely enough, no one was offended by their frank and carefree manner. The women were soon imitating Tillie in her casual attire. When Tillie wore Girl Scout shoes, her friends smilingly donned the thick-soled footwear. When Tillie, at the outbreak of the war, put on a white nurse's uniform and took courses in nursing, it became "the patriotic thing to do" within her circle. Unconsciously, some even began to imitate Tillie's voice and mannerisms. Certain of the men, following Michael's example, became bolder in expressing their opinions, and likes and dislikes. They affected his good-natured, yet dynamic personality, although naturally their imitation never achieved the subtleties of the original.

Occasionally, someone would attempt to delve deeper than the glamorous exterior that Tillie and Michael presented to the world at large. "Tillie and Michael" was always a topic for lively conversation. Questions would arise . . . can they really be so completely happy in such an uncertain way of living? . . . doesn't Michael seem, at times, like a stubborn little boy, with his likes and dislikes? . . . are they different because they want to be, or is it self-defense? . . . wouldn't that constant gayety be a strain? . . . isn't



that poise and worldliness just a shade too studied? But no one could ever really answer the questions, for no one could find the keyhole through which to look into the hearts of Tillie and Michael. Someone would remember Tillie's fondness for fresh flowers—she always wore one—and wonder if perhaps there was a note of wistfulness in her voice when she told of her childhood home. They would wonder if maybe Tillie would give up her precious Chinese pajamas and her expensive perfumes for a house and garden that would outlast Michael's jobs. Who knows? But then Tillie and Michael would arrive and those who questioned would put away their doubts, ready to start having fun—ready to climb on the “merry-go-round” again.

As suddenly and unexplainably as they had entered, Tillie and Michael withdrew from the lives of their friends. Some said that they had retired to a farm in Indiana. Others said that they had been divorced. No one seemed to know exactly what had happened to them; soon they grew tired of talking and wondering about it, so they just stopped. The era of “Tillie and Michael” was forgotten, and those who had known them, or had thought that they had known them, went instinctively back to their old ways of living.

## George Bernard Shaw, Iconoclast

Private EDWARD TUCKER

*A.S.T. English 111a, Theme 5, Summer, 1943*

ONCE THE WRITER OF UNSUCCESSFUL ESSAYS, THE expounder of trifling notions, George Bernard Shaw has since come into his own with the satirical comedy, and with this type of entertainment he has remained. He uses his plays for his ideas, and of the latter he has a great abundance.

Shaw fights against sham; he despises hypocrisy. He designs characters in his plays to show these qualities; then, he makes fun of these characters. The Christian martyrs in *Androcles and the Lion* are shown to be no more than ordinary men, dying, not for Christianity, but for fame. The condemner in *The Showing-Up of Blanco Posnet* becomes a worker for hypocrisy, a character greatly inferior to the condemned, a character for whom hate was made.

Shaw, to express his idea that all men are the same, has placed in local surroundings characters of history—great people infected with idiosyncrasies that are still peculiarly modern—and he has made them live. Cleopatra in the first part of the play *Caesar and Cleopatra* is shown as a naive young

girl, full of silly ideas, afraid of everything; later she is pictured as a woman of great depth, truly worthy of her name in history. Caesar, the blustering, swaggering conqueror, is shown as a hero, but, at the same time, also as a "heel." In *Saint Joan*, Joan of Arc is a woman of vision who, after seeing her saints, goes forth to win for herself the glory of fame, allowing nothing to stand in her way.

Modern woman, under Shaw's skilled hands, comes into her own. Superman, who, incidentally, is woman in *Man and Superman*, sees her man, chases him, and finally catches him, but not until the man has played hard to get and to keep. In the only perfect play he ever wrote, *Candida*, Shaw creates his only perfect woman—Candida, a woman in her early thirties, brilliant with the brilliance of scholars, wise with the wisdom of leaders, beautiful with the beauty of queens. She alone will remain after all else is gone; she alone will rival Shaw for everlasting fame; he is Pygmalion—she is Galatea come to life.

Shaw, the predecessor of many a president, hates war. He shows the good soldier in *Arms and the Man*, but the good soldier is the professional soldier, able to realize his desired wants, glad to live in the midst of ghastly battles. Shaw's war hero is a victim of circumstance; he is not a hero, but a man led to do something great through his own involuntary action. In *The Devil's Disciple*, the man of leadership is not the hero; the only true hero is the rascal.

Shaw, a cyclist, a vegetarian, and an iconoclast, knows his audiences from beginning to end. He places his plays for them; he glories in their rebellions; he secretly laughs at their mocking; but he continues in his same way. His readers must be either for him completely or against him completely; there can be no half-way mark. Certainly, Shaw's ideas are iconoclastic, but they set him apart, and, incidentally, they bring him fame.

## My "Jekyll-Hyde" Professor

Private TOM WAHL

*A.S.T. English 111a, Theme 6, Summer, 1943*

THE CLASS LEANED FORWARD EXPECTANTLY AS Professor Herbert entered the room. None of us had ever seen him before, and we all were eager to find out just what sort of person was going to take us, during our first nine months of college, deep into the enchanting realms of English literature. Professor Herbert was an elderly gentleman



who, in spite of his baggy tweed suit, was stately and almost extremely dignified. All of us had heard certain unrelated facts about him—that he had numerous degrees, including one from Oxford, England; that he had a lovely family; and that he was one of the closest friends of the then living and irrepressible Alexander Woollcott—and our first view of him fitted right in with the general impression most of us had already formed. When he spoke, it was with a beautifully cultured, almost effeminate voice, and we all knew that here we had a man who thought in the language of Shakespeare, inhaled the sensuous beauties of Shelley, and lived in the dream world of Spenser.

As the weeks passed by, Dr. Herbert made the course grow increasingly interesting. We all marveled at the easy manner he had when he quoted long passages from Chaucer and Pope or when he explained a difficult passage from "Il Penseroso." The way he flitted around the campus, with his long gray cloak enveloping him, and with "Spike," his French poodle who never missed a class, running in front of him, made him venerably regarded as a campus character, respected and admired by all of us.

My first impression of Professor Herbert was doomed, however. Early one Sunday morning, when I was preparing to go to bed in the fraternity house after a rather difficult Saturday night, I heard a loud commotion come in the front door and start making its way up the stairs. Thinking that several of my brethren were coming in after an ordinary evening of drunken revelry, I went on with my ablutions. I was brushing my teeth in a dazed manner when—WHACK!—I was hit on the back with a jolt which nearly caused me to swallow my toothbrush. I spun around and choked at the sight of Professor Herbert standing there with sparkling eyes, the usual baggy suit, a partially filled glass of Scotch whiskey in his hand, and a small group of laughing upperclassmen surrounding him. He seemed to enjoy the look of amazement which had come over my face, for he laughed loudly and then shouted with a voice which still bore traces of his Oxford refinement, "How the hell are you, Wahl, you old ———?" I stammered out a reply to the effect that I was quite well, "thank you, sir," and that I hoped he was too. He turned to the youths with him and made a remark which caused my face to grow red, although the other fellows seemed to enjoy it immensely. Then he turned back to me and told me that I was entirely too young and untainted to be hanging around with a worldly old reprobate like him. With that remark, he turned about and stumbled out of the room, shouting for one of the students to hurry with the glasses and the ice so that the new party could get under way.

I stood motionless with wonder for several minutes, but then I took the old man's advice and climbed the stairs to bed, feeling that I had been

totally disillusioned, and not understanding how such a kindly and genteel person as Dr. Herbert could allow himself to become so obnoxious. I dreaded my first hour class with him on Monday morning, for I did not see how he would be able to look me in the eye, but throughout the class nothing was different in any respect from what it had ever been. Professor Herbert was once more the aristocratic intellectual I had formerly known him to be.

During the weeks which followed, I discovered much about his amazing "Jekyll and Hyde" complex. He had a small group of student friends, all of whom were intelligent upperclassmen with influential names on the campus. Two or three nights a month Professor Herbert would slip away from his matronly wife and his refined environment, would round up his student gang, and would begin an evening which might cover every nightclub and speak-easy within miles, and which usually ended sometime the following morning. From what I was told, many of his little parties assumed orgiastic proportions. Professor Herbert would always be the center of attraction, continually talking and singing with base and sensual words. Most of the students were disgusted with Dr. Herbert's character, but all of them were admittedly envious of the men he chose to go out with him.

I remained undecided in my opinion of the good professor until my last few weeks in college, more than a year and a half after I had first seen him. Dr. Herbert heard, through a friend of mine who was a member of his chosen group, that I was going into the Army in a very short time, and I was amazed to hear that I had been invited to go out with him on his next carousal. I accepted the invitation heartily, and, before I finally left college, I had gone out with Dr. Herbert several times. During those parties I had opportunities to talk for long periods of time with him, and I can say that I left college with a definite place in my heart for the old gentleman whose personal life was so disgusting to many of the students.

I admire Dr. Herbert because he is living his life as he thinks it ought to be lived. The opinion of society is too important a factor to most of us, keeping us from being our natural selves. To the completely uninhibited person, life would hold nothing but beauty and happiness, and the opinions of his fellowmen would mean nothing to him. Dr. Herbert is not completely uninhibited, but when he goes out on his wild revelries he does it simply because he feels like it and he doesn't give a "tinker's damn" who knows about it. The old English poets understood and recognized the beauties and the pleasures of the life about them. They are great because they could write about their feelings and their environments in such a way that more prosaic men could recognize in them their own latent, repressed, feelings. Dr. Herbert is a great man (not that he will ever be famous) because he is not artificial. He is delightfully real.



# Fry's Field

ROBERT N. RASMUS

*Rhetoric II, Theme 8, 1942-1943*

I SUPPOSE EVERY AMERICAN HAS HAD SOME SPOT, A swimming hole, a hayloft, a back alley, or a school yard, which was his favorite haunt. Mine was Fry's Field, a few acres of prairie land situated just across the Chicago Northwestern railroad tracks, a block or so from my house. The only unusual thing about Fry's Field is its location. It is set in the middle of a large residential district of several hundred thousand people, and considering the high value of Chicago real estate, it is a wonder that the field exists at all. Probably the reason for its not being built up is that the noise and dirt from the railroad, and the presence of the sand and coal yards which lie on either side of the field make it undesirable for residential building; the revising of the zoning laws prevents any further industrial building. Whatever the reason, however, the fact is that it is there, and throughout the years of my childhood it was the scene of many of my happiest experiences.

Whenever I think of Fry's Field, the first thing that I think of is an assortment of tramps, Mexicans, and gypsies. I couldn't have been more than three or four years old when I first listened with wide-open eyes to the tales told by the older boys about the swarthy Mexicans, the grizzled tramps, and the thieving gypsies who inhabited this mysterious land across the tracks. I was greatly intrigued and continually begged my mother for permission to go over to Fry's Field. She told me that I might get hit by the train, and furthermore that the tramps and Mexicans didn't like little boys. The refusals only increased my curiosity, and finally by the time I was five I had worked up enough courage to climb up over the embankment of the tracks to explore this wonderland of tall grass, scraggly willows, and sand hills. The gypsies were only imaginary, but here, in real life, were the Mexican railroad hands and the fabulous tramps, living in their tumble-down shacks.

I shall never forget that first day at Fry's Field. I had ridden my tricycle up to the side of the embankment of the tracks, and then after leaving it in the grass and quickly looking to both sides for the train, I had dashed madly across as fast as my little legs would carry me. Once on the other side, I was hidden in grass that was higher than my head, and I at once began to wonder about the wisdom of my venture. It was too late to turn back now, however, so I gritted my teeth and began to make my way laboriously in the general direction of the place where the older boys told me the tramps stayed. After a few hundred feet I came to a small ridge from behind which

I could see trails of gray smoke rising. Knowing that I had found them, but fearful lest they might see me, I crawled on my hands and knees to the edge of the ridge, and excitedly peered over. There they were, six dirty, tattered relics of men, lying on the ground, apparently in a drunken stupor. When one of them rolled over and opened his bleary eyes, I turned, and like a terror-stricken jack rabbit ran for home. The next time I went over to Fry's Field, it was with several other boys, and we carefully kept a good distance from the tramps' camp site.

After I had gotten over my initial fright, I began to feel quite at home at Fry's Field; soon I was spending almost all of my time outside of school there. This was entirely natural, though, because in the few acres of this prairie land within the city was almost anything a small boy with a big curiosity and an uncontrollable desire for make-believe could want. On the western side of the field was a building materials storage yard with several large sand hills ideal for desert warfare. To the south of the hills was a small pond bordered by scraggly little willows. The eastern boundary was the railroad with a couple of sidings for the coal and lumber yards, and the northern boundary was an old cemetery. The Mexican railroad workers had their shacks about fifty feet from the railroad, and the tramps were situated between the sand hills and the pond. Also within the limits of the field were a "haunted" house and a small cluster of trees. The rest of the field was just plain grass and weeds.

The place was ideal for all the variations of "hide-and-seek." Although one day it was "Arabs and Niggers" in the sand hills that my friends and I played, and the next day it was "cops-and-robbers" in the lumber yards, and still the following day "cowboys-and-Indians" in the prairie, basically, they all amounted to nothing more than hiding and finding. But what fun! Playing "Arabs-and-Niggers" in the sand hills had one disadvantage, though. Martin, the night-watchman, and his mean dog, Wilhelm, came every night at five o'clock, and many were the times that we were sent in headlong flight with the cur, Wilhelm, at our heels.

And when our interests turned to the sea, there was the polliwog pond. Stagnant little mud puddle that it was, it was the nearest thing to an ocean that we had, and it was never too small to sail our rafts in pirate warfare. As soon as the tiny black polliwogs appeared, however, we abandoned the Spanish Main for the polliwog net, and the polliwogs we missed in the infant state we caught later as adult frogs. I don't know how the species reproduced itself, but until the year the pond was drained as a breeder of mosquitoes, every spring saw a new batch of wiggling little polliwogs, in greater numbers than ever.

When I reached the hut-building age, Fry's Field was the perfect place for the practice of that art. Our specialty was grass huts, and an enjoyable, if dangerous, pastime was burning down the other fellow's hut with a flaming brand.



When I was about ten years old, birds became my hobby. My mother gave me a bird field book and her old pair of opera glasses, and thus equipped I often went over to Fry's Field and the adjacent cemetery early in the morning to identify new birds. I well remember one day late in March when I saw a bluebird, which, of course, for the city is very rare. I ran all the way home, shouting all the way to my mother about the new discovery. She was just as thrilled as I was, and after that we often made our bird exploring trips together. Since that time I have identified dozens of species at Fry's Field which are supposed never to be seen in the city.

After I started high school, although my "cowboy-and-Indian" days were gone forever, Fry's Field still held its attraction for me. Even though most of my time I spent at school work, and much of my spare time participating in sports and playing in the school band, every opportunity I had I went over to Fry's Field. Fry's Field had not lost its value to me—it just had of necessity to play a lesser part in my life. Now when I went over, it was to walk my dog, or to work out some besetting problem, or just to bask in the sun and daydream. Some of the happiest moments I can remember were those I spent on top of the highest sand hill, looking across to the blue waters of Lake Michigan. The sand, the sky, and the sun seemed to solve all my problems.

Another ailment for which Fry's Field was a good, though not a lasting, cure was spring fever. When I was sitting in a drowsy Latin class, fighting a losing battle to concentrate on Cicero's second oration against Cataline, and when I thought of the soft, luxuriant grass at Fry's Field, it was little wonder that I found it necessary to quit school for the day and go over there to bask in the sun.

And also I came to feel differently about the tramps. No longer did they hold any terrors for me, once I had worked up enough nerve to speak to them. They were just poor, broken men who were ruined by the ravages of drink. They were to be pitied—not feared. Two, in particular, I remember because of their remarkable sense of humor and their refreshing philosophy. Scotty and James Flynn were drunkards, but they were also "true knights of the road." They had been to every big city in this country and Mexico, and they never tired of relating their experiences to me. Between stories they would sing a lively song or give a spicy recitation and then take a swig from the bottle. I was delighted with their tales and songs, but it pained me to see men of such high mentality slaves to drink and in such a state.

I don't get much chance to visit Fry's Field any more, but I consider a week end at home incomplete if I can't spend at least a few minutes at my old hunting ground. Even as I write this I can vividly picture a gang of bronze-skinned, healthy looking kids playing "cops-and-robbs" in the "wilds" of Fry's Field. They are happy kids.

# Alchemy for the Modern

BERNARD MILLER

*Rhetoric I, Theme 8, Summer, 1943*

A TRIANGLE OF DOTS MEANS SAND. GOLD CAN BE MADE from egg shells roasted for eight years. Fire is "phlogiston" leaving a body. Out of such symbols, such experiments, such ill-forged theories—out of these beginnings grew chemistry. Today it is an organized science which studies the matter of the universe with all the romance of unknown things.

Ammonium is interesting. It is a combination of oxygen and nitrogen gases which acts like a metal. However, this "ammonium metal" has never been isolated. The nearest thing to its metallic form is a queer alloy. A little sodium-mercury alloy is added to a solution of ammonium chloride. Instantly the alloy forms and grows to two or three times its original volume. Here is an alloy of a non-existent metal!

The instructors tell you that they are not certain of its composition, but they know that calgon can pick up the calcium in hard water, make it a part of itself, and leave the water soft.

Surely you have seen advertisements for the Dow Metal Company—"Magnesium from sea water." Interestingly, the Dow process starts with a magnesium compound, goes through several steps, and ends with the same compound. It uses sea shells to aid these reactions. It uses a by-product to turn the near-by natural gas into an acid. Out of such complexities comes magnesium.

Such is the world of chemistry that is opening to me. There are elusive "complex ions" and chemical "mechanisms" which help explain otherwise unexplainable happenings in the laboratory. There are the smells of the laboratory which become a part of a chemist's life. There are the ever-exciting productions of gases and precipitates, and analyses of unknowns which make one feel like an explorer on the edge of an unknown wilderness. And its mysteries still remain, for, "In the distance tower still higher peaks, which will yield to those who ascend them still wider prospects."\* With such a challenge and such things to learn, no wonder chemistry is my favorite course.

\*Sir Joseph John Thomson.



# Soldiers as Citizens

Private D. E. TRUAX

*A.S.T. English 111a, Theme 5, Summer, 1943*

PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONE MUCH THINKING ABOUT THE political situation after the war—and I mean thinking, not pipe-dreaming—eventually come around to wondering what the political influence of the ex-soldier is going to be. From all I have heard, the civilians have a pretty gloomy outlook on the whole thing. To put it bluntly, what they expect is character deterioration. They imagine that discipline will have eaten the soldier's will; that he will be eager to be led and careless of where he is led. And yet, with true humanness, they are worried more about the unpleasantness of having a group of semi-rowdies in the community than of having an easily swayed group of voters.

Much of this comes from the superficial view the civilian has of the soldier. In the towns around the camps the soldier is relaxing, blowing off steam. In his letters he tries to give the folks back home the picture of a Kiplingesque fighter; so he exaggerates the toughness, the roughness, and the discipline. The only other sources of information are the newspapers and magazines. These are either journalistic equivalents of the letters home or the work of someone who is trying to prove that the soldier is being treated too poorly or too well. The army recognizes the soldier's thinking ability by the care it exercises in the choosing of officers. Soldiers are critical of their leaders and discuss the wisdom of their every move. Although the army probably would like to curb freedom of speech to a certain extent, it cannot stop the soldier's habit of discussing everything under the sun. The average private is stubborn about his views and will stick up for them. The worst attitude that the veteran will take back to civilian life is that of lack of faith in the "higher-ups." This is ingrained in the rookie from the time he leaves the induction center, and he is a lucky rookie if he doesn't get a practical demonstration of the reason behind it in his first week in the army. This attitude is not directed at any one person or group. The bungling is done by "them," a shadowy band in the haze of army bureaucracy.

The soldier is going to be changed a great deal when he returns home—he will have discarded many of his old ideas and picked up many new ones—but in the long run he is going to be little better or worse than he was before he left. His ideas about the social system are going to be a little different. In the enforced democracy of the barracks he has found that many of his gods of financial success are clay right up to the ears. He has found that those who are just up or down the financial or social scale from him are not very much better or worse than he is; that they have no holy war against each

other; and that they are really not such bad fellows. For a while at least he is going to be stimulated and have a desire to make vast improvements in the world. His methods are going to be changed by the methods of warfare. The high price paid in life and suffering for military objectives is going to bring to his mind the analogy that sacrificing the strict rights of a few to further the general welfare isn't very wrong.

## A.S.T.P. Education

Private STEWART G. TUTTLE

*A.S.T. English 111a, Theme 8, Summer, 1943*

WHEN THE CLASS AVERAGE ON A COMPARATIVELY simple physics test is 23, when half a class fails to score higher than 60 points out of 100 on an elementary geography test, and when instructors use an unforeseen four weeks' extension of the A.S.T. program entirely for review, something is wrong. And these illustrations are only scattered examples of the difficulties encountered by the A.S.T. plan. In every field of learning inadequate results are forthcoming.

The army authorities have attempted to explain these results, contending that a minority of the students are either ill-prepared or lazy. Yet mediocre results have been attained by a majority of the soldiers. And even if these assumptions are correct, are they not results, rather than causes, of the inadequacy of the program?

The students have tried to find the answer to the problem. Many of them contend that they are carrying too many credits of college work. Others point out that they are permitted too little time to prepare their homework. Still others insist that the teaching staff is poor! For a few these reasons are valid. For most, however, they merely represent good rationalizations. The time provided, if not overabundant, is sufficient. Yet is the motive provided the student strong enough? Let us examine this more carefully.

Higher education is a very complex system requiring that both the teacher and the student have as their goals the achievement of learning. Some students will move toward this goal willingly with the sole motive of gaining more knowledge. They are in the minority. Others resolutely refuse to move toward that goal regardless of the attraction it may offer. They, too, are in the minority. By far the greatest number of students require some tangible motive to work before they will show any appreciable effort. They must be shown that their efforts will result in prestige, personal gain, or skill. The A.S.T.P. does not offer these.



Instead it points to the fighting man on the front and draws a comparison between his sacrifices and the one that the A.S.T.P. student should be making. This comparison cannot be drawn. Basically it offers a destructive rather than a constructive motive; it supplants the normal pride in achievement with the fear of disapproval. While this means may prove effective for a short time, it is useless over long periods. And, in addition, most trainees have a vague yearning to play a part in the actual fighting of the war anyway.

To be sure, the army has made doubtful and tentative promises of commissions, which, it contends, will be awarded to successful soldiers, but most A.S.T.P. students have been in the army long enough to recognize these as outgrowths of the "old army game." Were they not also told that they might take their course as quickly as they were able, only to discover that they proceeded as quickly as the average student? Were they not promised courses in psychology, languages, or medicine, only to find themselves basic engineers?

The aviation cadet looks forward to the day when he can fly in combat, the civilian college student awaits the day when he can make profitable use of his education, and the V-12 trainee plans for the day when he can take his place as a deck officer. What does the A.S.T.P. soldier await? He doesn't know, and whatever motive he creates to make him work must be drawn from an already worn imagination.

It is this situation, I believe, that is contributing to the difficulties of the A.S.T.P. The soldier student does not know where he is going. He does not know whether his future will be good or bad, and consequently his efforts are not concentrated. The program is theoretically excellent, but it does not take human aspirations into consideration. And this apparently insignificant consideration is causing and will continue to cause serious difficulties for the authorities who are attempting to carry on the A.S.T.P. successfully.

## Sleep

There was a narrow board cot in the room which matched the ugly, square, upholstered pieces scattered about the floor, and like them was furnished with a thin, harsh cushion stuffed with horsehair, but the girl was afraid to sleep in so public a place as a railroad station, where the male hangers-on looked at her curiously from time to time during the lapses in their conversation. Almost absentmindedly she shrank from their look, and was grateful for the noisy entrance of a party of cheerful travellers, or the grinding, roaring, huffing arrival of a train on the tracks outside, which turned their attention from her. But the noise and movement dragged her painfully from her semi-hypnotic state, sent along her raw and sensitive nerves the frantic call to wake up, and caused the four gray walls of the room to dance toward her mockingly in a dizzy jig.

—MARY ANN PICKREL

# For Freedom

MATHEW WILENSKY

*Rhetoric II, Theme 13, 1942-1943*

THE VOICE OF THE ELEVATED TRAINS OVERHEAD mingled with the shouts of the vendor below was a sign that it was early morning. Al tossed and turned, pulled the covers up about his head and pretended to sleep; but it was no use. With a casual remark about "hating to work for a living," he threw off the covers and sat on the edge of the bed. He rested his chin on the palms of his hands and wiggled his toes, watching them with a strange fascination, as if contemplating a dreadful crime. He walked quietly to the bathroom, a towel thrown over his shoulder, his toothbrush, razor, and soap in his hands. The noise he made singing in the bathroom woke my mother, myself, and my brother. It woke us every morning, but we never told him that it bothered us; we liked to hear him sing; we knew he was happy. Al was already seated at the table eating breakfast when I entered the kitchen. He didn't notice me enter because he was reading the morning paper. I didn't mind though; he always read the paper at the table. I had just about finished my breakfast when he noticed me sitting there.

"Well, did you have a good sleep, or did my snoring keep you awake?"

"No, I got used to that noise a long time ago."

"Finish eating and I'll drive you up town." I drank my milk hurriedly and ran to get my coat.

It was hot outside, and although the sun had not yet appeared there was a sticky warmth in the air. The street was almost deserted, and only the occasional bark of a dog, or the roar of a truck going to market broke the silence. The dirty, forbidding, red brick buildings looked mysterious and foreign in the early morning light. Steam from the tenement houses rose slowly, straight up in the air, like a gigantic pillar. There was no wind; there were no clouds.

I got into the front seat of the car, and watched him start the motor. We turned the corner, and started up Broadway. I caught a glimpse of Al's face in the mirror. It was smooth, and very tan, well cut and sharp. His chin was pointed and firm, and every time he smiled you could see a scar near the corner of his mouth. The clock on the Times Building struck eight as we came into Times Square. Al drove past Forty-Fourth Street, and then turned left at Forty-Sixth Street. A long line of orange and yellow taxicabs stretched toward the Hudson on both sides of the street. Al found an empty space and parked the car.



Two fellows came running across the street. They were about the same height, about six feet tall. One of them was very dark. He had short cropped hair, a trim moustache, and a black hackman's cap dangling on the back of his head. He wore a leather jacket with big pockets, a black bow tie, white shirt, and black creased pants. His name was Vinnie di Rosa—an Italian lad from First Street. The other fellow was much lighter in complexion. He had blond hair, the usual blue eyes, a clean face, and no moustache. He wore a blue, slipover sweater, an open-collared white shirt, tan pants, and brown and white shoes. His name was Ted Morse—a sensible Irishman from Fourteenth Street.

They were angry about an article that had appeared in the morning newspaper. All I could hear was, "What's this world coming to?" Before I knew what happened Al was in the midst of the argument. I left the three of them, Al, Vinnie, and Ted, arguing on the corner of Forty-Sixth Street and Broadway.

When I returned home that evening I noticed that something was wrong. There were no lights in the kitchen, and when I called out I received no answer. I ran up the stairs to my room. A light was on, and there in one part of the room I saw Al. My brother Gene came out of the bathroom carrying Al's razor and toothbrush. An air of suspense and anxiety hovered about the room. I walked toward my mother and sat on the bed near her chair. She handed me a copy of one of the evening newspapers. I glanced at the headlines and I knew what had happened. There was no need for questions or reasons. Al had said it was coming and that he was going to do something about it. They all said it, Al, Vinnie, and Ted. They were going to fight in some foreign land on the other side of the world for something they believed in, for freedom. I looked at the paper again, and the huge black letters stared at me and screamed their ugly message: "Revolution in Spain, Fascist Uprising in Madrid."

Al left the next night. He carried an old weathered suit case in one hand and a raincoat in the other. He stopped at the door, turned, and looked at my mother. She ran to him, and they clung to each other, neither one saying a word, neither one daring to. They kissed, and I thought I saw a tear in Al's eye, but I wasn't sure. He gripped my hand, and I remembered what he said:

"Take care of Gene and Mom, and when Dad gets back from his trip tell him where I am. Tell him I'm going to fight. So long! And take care of yourself."

He looked at me for a moment as if he had something else to say, but he didn't say another word. He opened the door and walked out into the cool, black night. In the distance I could hear the grinding of a taxi's gears as it stopped for a red light.

# Queen of the Flat Tops by Stanley Johnston

RICHARD CARDOZO

*Rhetoric I, Theme 3, 1943-1944*

**V**IVID SEEMS TO BE THE MOST FITTING TERM FOR Stanley Johnston's inspiring account of the saga of the *U.S.S. Lexington*, a kind, lovable old lady in peace, a fierce, gun totin' moll in war. Told in the words of the men who fought and died on her, the "Lex's" story is a gripping one. They loved her, those men, and they lost their dearest friend when the gurgling South Pacific seas washed over the burned-out hulk of the first aircraft carrier to fly the flag of the United States.

Although not written in matter-of-fact journal form, the saga of the "Lex" nevertheless maintains some semblance of chronological order. The author has pieced together an exciting, vibrant tale, from segments supplied by the officers and men of that gallant ship. The book is written in the free, powerful style of a skillful newspaper writer, and as a result holds the reader's interest throughout. It's an exciting adventure story, but in contrast to the average adventure story, it embodies the added punch of extreme, cruel reality.

A good imagination is the fare required for a one-way trip to the heart of hell, via Salamaua, Tulagi, and the Coral Sea. Once aboard, we meet the men who were the nerves of the "Lex;" the men who gave their lives in the hope that she would survive; the men who fought like demons to give the "Lex" her glory; the men who buried their heads and sobbed, when she gasped and slipped beneath the waves.

One such man, a lucky survivor of her last great moment, sat upright in a crowded rescue ship, and with determination written on his tear-stained face, wrote the following, a tribute to the "Lex" which was published in the memorial issue of that ship's newspaper:

We saw her live  
Gloriously; her memory will give  
To all who saw her noble end  
Strength this nation to defend.



# “Oh, What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

JOYCE GOTHWAITE

*Rhetoric II, Theme 2, 1943-1944*

THE FARMER ARISES AT THE TINIEST CRACK OF DAWN and works the long day through. His is the drabbest of existences, with the single possible exception of that of his wife. Her life is her kitchen and it is not bordered with “decalcomanias.” And because the farmer and his wife lead this sort of life, they crave excitement: music, voices, and companionship.

This desire is answered by one of their own kith, the local touring preacher. In all probability he was brought up to polish the boots of a village parson, but, having initiative and the approval of the people, has branched out and has become the ministering angel to outlying farms and small communities—a welcome parasite.

It is not only because they desire companionship that farm folk are so deeply religious. They need sober thoughts to ponder upon while carrying on the day's work. Then, too, their religion is inherited. They know next to nothing of the meanings of the various creeds; they know less about skepticism. However, they do know the contents of the Bible and have, besides a complete faith in their God, a no-less-complete faith in themselves. Heyday for the preacher and the curious summer residents. Revival meetin' tonight, folks! Come early and stay for collection!

The meeting takes place in a designated farmer's home. His wife has spent the entire day making it ready, and all the morals are newly washed and hanging in conspicuous places. (“Do only what you would be doing when Jesus comes.”) The preacher's daughter, a hardy lass of fifteen, has her accordion strapped over her shoulder and is trying out chords to impress the growing group. The sheep come in outmoded Fords, grinning and chattering. (“Why, Mae, I didn't know you were getting store teeth! My! Don't they look neatish?”) The parson has flowing, white hair and a gaunt look about his face. The shine in his suit matches beautifully the twinkle in his eye as he observes the growing congregation. I always attributed the glow to his desire for an ample attendance, although less kind and more discerning souls have said that it came from the sight of a pleasing feminine form; at any rate, no one ever accused him of drinking. The farmer's wife bustles around, turning the wicks of the kerosene lamps just a little higher. (“Be careful, Lena—they chimbleys have been taped up onct.”) Finally the buzzing ceases and the preacher gets down to business.

The meeting opens with a declaration of the necessity of religion in the wilds. It meanders through a reading and interpretation from the Bible. ("Brother Wixtrom, would you be so kind as to read this little passage?") Then the fun begins. Sandwiched between songs ("Are you washed in the blood, in the soul-cleansing blood of the lamb?") come the testimonials. The first witness invariably states, coolly and collectedly, "I'm so glad to say that I've been saved." The remainder of the congregation views him critically and tries to go him one better. The climax is terrific. Men and women alike break out in tears, stamp their feet, tear their hair and scream, "I'm saved—glory to God!" When the preacher sees that his party is getting a little too rough, he starts them singing "Oh What a Friend We Have in Jesus," after which they file quietly out, leaving their donations. Pocketing the money and thanking the hostess, the preacher (Hallelujah, brother!) and his daughter jog noisily away in their Model T.

When the excitement is over, the farmer's wife returns to spanking the kiddies and separating the milk. And I, in my privileged status, turn to ponder on just what effect this has had on me. I'm certain that the preacher is nothing more than a fakir. But what of the farmer and his wife? Are they only playing up for the occasion and the excitement or are they in dead earnest? Is their religion the best kind for them? Should I treat this subject tenderly or should I ridicule them? However, even in this undecided state of mind, I enjoy my parties and feel pretty much that it's all right just as long as they have a friend in Jesus, no matter how they proclaim it.

## One Great Love Have I

MATILDA FAZEKAS

*Rhetoric I, Theme 5, 1943-1944*

WHenever I hear the throbbing roar of an airplane's motor, I seldom fail to look up into the sky and thrill to the sight of a plane coming into view, passing overhead, and disappearing into the distant horizon. I am even more thrilled when the plane is a DC-3 towing a brace of cargo gliders; or perhaps it is a Waco towing a training glider and sturdily growling its way to high altitudes, where it will leave the frail craft to soar and dip its way to a landing field miles away. Gliders hold a special place in my love for airplanes. Perhaps it is because I have practically lived with them for the past year. I have watched a great number of them grow from the drafting boards to finished products, gleaming in silent rows as they wait for the test pilot to take them up and prove their airworthiness.



The construction of a glider is divided into five main parts. The machine shop assemblies include the manufacturing of the metal parts for a glider, such as the fuselage, the wing-fitting brackets, and the tail group brackets. The construction of the wings and the tail group, with their many sub-assemblies, takes place in the woodshop department. Then the complete wings, the tail group, and the fuselage are covered with airplane fabric. The principle of fabrication is to give the airplane parts an even contour to create airfoil. Upon completion of fabrication, the assemblies are taken into the dope shop for painting. If the gliders are being manufactured for Army use, they are painted with the colors of the Army Air Forces, and wing insignia are put on the wings at an even distance between the upper and lower longerons. If the gliders are for commercial use, a combination of colors may be used, suiting the tastes of the designer or manufacturer.

Next, the assemblies move to the final assembly department. It is here that the wings and the tail group are fitted to the fuselage; it is here that the landing gear is fitted into the wheel well, and the plexiglass cowling is attached to the cockpit. The final stage of construction is the installation and checking of instruments.

Now the glider is ready to be tested. Careful hands push it across the floor to hangar doors and out onto the runway. The towrope is attached to the towplane; the towplane's pilot runs his motor; the glider's pilot gives his signal to the wing man, who levels the wings, and off it goes—into the wide blue yonder!

In such a manner is another glider completed and put into the air. However, there are many fears running through the mind of every observer on the ground. Will the wings hold up? Is the fabric tight enough? Week after week, month after month, gliders roll off the assembly line and are tested. Every once in a while the dreaded crack-up will happen. A wing will fall off during a test flight; ten people will die in a matter of seconds because an inexperienced worker machined a wing strut fitting a fraction of an inch too thin. By such accidents are improvements made in design and production supervision, but what a great price is paid for them!

However, not only structural deficiencies will wreck a glider. The air, with all its storms and calms, down-drafts and thermals, is a powerful, unfathomable force. The motorless, heavier-than-air glider flies itself. It is constantly at the mercy of the surrounding air because it depends solely upon it for buoyancy and maneuverability. Many of us have studied a leaf drifting in the wind. We have seen how it is tossed about by prevailing, unseen wind currents. A glider is subject to the same treatment. Sometimes all the skill and knowledge of the pilot will not save the plane from turning end on end and finally dropping to the ground, as a leaf eventually does.

A person interested in gliding is aware of these things. He knows the business from beginning to end. However, there is no complete description

of the feeling he experiences when he is up in the air, riding a thermal to heights of thousands of feet. Up and up, around and around soars the ship inside the thermal. Perhaps an eagle is riding the same thermal only a few feet away. Soon he is left behind, and the ship breaks away from the thermal and starts gliding. Far below, the ground spreads out in a beautiful checker-board of green pastures, yellow wheat fields, and blue ribbons of river. As far as the eye can see, there stretches the exalting grandeur of God-made scenery. Many miles away is the landing field. If the pilot starts his descent now, he will reach the field just as the last rays of the sun slant across the hangars, and the first mists of evening begin to form above the signal tower.

## The Language of "Siberia"

Private ARNOLD RUSTIN

*A.S.T. English 111b, Theme 1, 1943-1944*

MEN CONFINED TO CELLS, HELD IN ALMOST CONSTANT silence, ever fearful of being overheard, naturally tend to invent a vocabulary for their everyday surroundings. Because convicts are so conscious of the physical—their physical imprisonment, the physical punishment they receive, their lack of physical companionship—their words spring from direct physical impressions and are vivid and alive.

As a Civil Service Prison Guard at Clinton Prison, Dannemora, New York, fondly called "Siberia" by the boys, I had an excellent opportunity to hear and learn prison jargon. At first the men's conversations were unintelligible to me, and I remember musing, college student that I was, as Benedick does in *Much Ado About Nothing*, that their "words—are a very fantastical banquet—just so many strange dishes." However, as I mixed with the other guards and with the prisoners, I gradually came to understand and appreciate the strange descriptive words.

The words for the various foods served them were singularly well chosen. Consider the subtle touch in calling oysters, *snots*; or pork and beans, *squeal and artillery*; or coffee, *misery*. Not only were these descriptive words; they were as appetizing as the food the men were served. I chuckled when I learned that the New York police stations were called *Irish clubhouses*, and that a counterfeiter was known as a *green-goods-man*. Truly the most picturesque term was the name applied to a venereal disease sufferer, *orange-pop man*.



Now, let us suppose that an *old head* (a prisoner with a good bit of time in) goes *stir batty* (insane from prison life) and decides to *take it out* on some *two-way guy*. Well, he would *snitch* (steal) a spoon from the *slum house* (the mess hall) and by careful work would fashion a *chiv* (a knife) out of it. When the time came, he would let this *joker* (victim) *have it*—probably while they were on the *bucket brigade* (the daily morning line to empty chamber pots). Some *psalm singer* (trusty), looking for a *quick graduation*, might *chirp* (inform) to the *statue* (the tier guard). The *statue* would *put the pencil to* (report) the *nasty man* (the killer) to the *butcher* (the captain of the guards). The *butcher* would take the *old head up on the big green carpet* (the Warden's office) and have *Old Brass* (the Warden) quiz him.

If *Old Brass* could get nothing out of him, he would throw him into *sol* (solitary confinement) for a week on bread and water. If the *nasty man* would not *crack*, the *butcher* would call in the *Beef Squad* (the muscular guards) and have them take the *fall guy* (the luckless individual) to the *sweatbox* (the consultation room) for a *session*. If they got the *guy* to *sing* (to confess) they would probably *Cell 13* (permanently demobilize) him. However, if he was a *big stiff*, they might get a *stir agent* (a prison lawyer) to do a *quicke*, and inside of a week have the *boy* in the *dance hall* (the Death House).

In a very short time, *the day* would arrive, and the *salvation rancher* (the chaplain) would be around to take the *hearse man* (the convicted murderer) to his *floorless jig* (hanging). The *crackerneck* (the hangman) would give him his *necklace*, and, swoosh! Then they would ship the *dancer* (What word could better describe a dead man still swaying on the gallows?) to the *icebox* (the coroner's office) and forget the whole incident.

So it goes!

These vivid words and phrases are interesting in themselves as a study of an abnormal man's mind. They become even more exciting when the reader considers that they may someday worm their way into our everyday speech. Law-abiding people, staid, conservative people, inwardly yearn for the exciting and different life of the smart criminal. These people eagerly grasp at the vigorous and lawless words of the underworld—the raised eyebrows of equally staid friends give them a feeling of deviltry and rebelliousness.

Consider how such words as *bull*, *dick*, *flatfoot*, *fence*, *gorilla*, *stoolpigeon*, *jailbird*, *rod*, *gat*, and *Big House* have become a part of our vocabulary. Already *jailbird* has graduated to the colloquial level, and *fence* and *stoolpigeon* are considered perfectly good English words by *Webster*. In fifty years we may not be talking like our convicts of today, but we certainly will have borrowed many of their coinages and adopted them for our own use.

# The Technical Term M

Private ROBERT McLAUGHLIN

A.S.T. English 111b, Theme 2, 1943-1944

THE LETTER *M*, WHEN PLACED IN A SERIES, ONE *M* closely following another, can be used to voice approval—"mmmmmmmmhmmmm, my dear"—or used to ask a question—"mmmmmm?"—or used to voice disapproval—"mmm mmmmm!" The letter *m* is a handy alphabetical gadget. It can replace *mother*: *m* = *mother*. It can replace *million*: *M* is for the million times I've kissed you. *O* is for . . .

In physics, chemistry, and mathematics, *m* is used extensively as a replacing agent for, they say, purposes of simplification. In physics, for example, *M* stands for *mass*. Mass is the weight of a body, *W*, divided by the acceleration of gravity, *g*. Therefore, if one wishes to express that definition simply, one writes  $M = w/g$ . That appears to be a very basic truth. *M* stands for *mass*. So when, a few pages farther on in the physics book, you come across the formula  $M = F/f$ , you say to yourself with a knowing smile, "Mass is equal to *F* over *f*." You are wrong. *M* in this particular case means magnification of a lens. You are a little surprised at this, a little bewildered. *M* does not always mean *mass*. Someone has lied to you. As you leaf through your textbook you discover what I could have told you three months ago—that *m* is an inconsistent nymph of a letter. You read (with a catch in your voice) formulae in which *m* is the resistance of a wire or again the coefficient of mutual induction as in the powerful formula  $e = M \frac{di_2}{dt}$ .

Having watched the chameleon-like antics of *m* in a physics book, you should be slightly prepared to learn that in chemistry and mathematics *m* represents new and entirely unrelated ideas. In mathematics the slope of a line is the tangent of the angle which the line makes with the *x* axis, if there were an *x* axis. The slope is denoted by none other than the roving kid himself, *m*. *M* as employed by the chemist, on the other hand, acquires new dignity, capitalization, and meaning. *M* is for *molar*. *Molar* pertains to solutions. A one molar (1 M) solution contains one gram molecular weight of the chosen substance per liter of solution.

*M* is combined with other letters, too, in order to save time and to clarify. *MG* is not mass times gravity. *MG* is the metacentric height in determining whether a ship will float or turn over. In chemistry *mg* is magnesium; in mathematics *MG* is the segment of an arc. *GM* is gram. *Mn* is the strength of the north pole of a magnet (physics) and manganese (chemistry), and a distance on a sphere of radius *r* (mathematics). You can readily see how incredibly simpler scientists have made science by using the letter *m*.



# Studs Lonigan by James T. Farrell

RUDOLPH BUKOVSKY

*Rhetoric I, Theme 14, Summer, 1943*

THE STORY OF STUDS LONIGAN BEGAN IN THE PROSPEROUS, ornate era of Wilson, and closed in the depths and chaos of Hoover's administration.

The story of Studs Lonigan is the story of the education of an average American boy born of Irish-Catholic parents. The factors which were to have played an important part in Studs Lonigan's education were the home and family, the school, the church, and the playground. However, these institutions broke down and did not serve their function. His mother wanted Studs to pray every evening for God to grant him his vocation, but he did not want that. Studs' father wanted him to get an education, but he did not want that. The tragedy of Studs Lonigan is that he was basically too imaginative to stand the normal, humdrum life of the lower middle class.

Early in his boyhood, the streets became an important and potent educative factor in his life. For here Studs was able to express an allegiance to a social relationship. Here he and the rest of the Fifty-Eighth Street gang were able to take out their dislikes on the "kikes" and "dagos"; they were able to show off before "the punks"; they wasted their time on the empty air of an unsettled South Side of Chicago.

In time, the pool room became another important factor in his life. Here Studs was able to listen to and gawk at the glamorous "drugstore micks" who talked of their drinking episodes, of the "broads" they picked up, and of the "can-houses" they had visited. All this was new to Studs and much more romantic and adventurous than school or church or home.

When Studs reached young manhood, he was plunged into one of the most insane periods of our history—the era of Prohibition. This is the era when Studs and his "palsy walsies," with their "broads," their movies, their pool, their "alky," their poker, and their craps, drank to keep in spirit with the times. This is the time when Studs and his companions showed their terrible sportsmanship in wantonly crippling Jewboy Schwartz in a football game. This is the time when Studs and his pals shot craps to take turns in "gang-shagging" Iris. The final step to degradation was the drunken brawling on New Year's Eve, the slugging of Studs, and the rape of Irene by Weary Reilly. The bootleg liquor of the Prohibition era permanently impaired Studs and sent him into ignominy.

Studs Lonigan is neither a tough nor a gangster. He is a normal American youth of his time and class. He has as many good impulses as bad. How-

ever, in time, because of defeat, monetary poverty, and frustration, his values, which were not made for this world, slip away into a reverie. Studs is a dream to himself. And as the story progresses, his dream of himself changes. His character is revealed as that of a boy who envisions what he is going to be. He is a youth who is standing on the threshold of life. Slowly Studs catches up with his dream and passes it. It is no longer a romantic projection into the future, but a nostalgic image of what Studs Lonigan might have been.

"Every time a fly ball had been hit to him with men on the bases, he'd muffed it. Hoping for one thing, then another, and when he did get his chances—foul ball."

## Begin With an Ameba

PAUL TOLPIN

*Rhetoric II, Theme 15, Summer, 1943*

FORMALDEHYDE AND SHADOWS WERE STILL IN THE room. There had been one blue-bright light on, but he turned it off for a moment to sit in the silence and darkness, to think and rest his eyes. He was tired of dissecting with the forceps, and scalpel, and needles. The radiators hissed, and he could smell hot, dry air floating up to the ceiling. A faucet dripped with monotonous precision. He would be dissecting for a long time. Staring into the dark void of the room, he could see nothing clearly—just incomplete masses of jars, and bottles, and glass cases, and shiny-black enamelled tables. He slipped down in the chair and effortlessly thumped his heel on the floor. Soon darkness from the room filled his eyes; he felt very small and weak and warm. His foot stopped thumping, and the room became silent.

Three gigantic, transparent, undulating planaria swam through the room near the ceiling, swooped down and disappeared in a crack between the door and the floor. A red linoleum square divided in two, and in two, and in two until it finally became a prickly sea urchin and rolled away. He wasn't amazed. He just listened to the voice saying, "This is a squid, and it's got cuttlebone and sepia, and if you're lost on a desert island you can use the cuttlebone for a pen, the sepia for ink, and write letters home." "What about the ocean, the ocean, theoshun?"

The desks weren't desks. They were sand covered with sponges that squirted geysers of water all over; and it was wet. So, he swam through the plankton-green water down to the bottom of the room to get his dissect-

ing set. He had to have his dissecting set to cut. It was covered with wriggling centipedes, and he counted their legs just to be sure if—"54-55-56." There were oysters in the sand, and he reached for the oysters in the sand because oysters have pearls. Each oyster opened its shell and gave him a pearl. One was black, a black pearl, a black pearl. They dissolved. But the coral was red and fragile and pretty; he pulled a piece of coral apart and crumbled it in his fingers; he studied the red coral dust in the water. Shadows passed over his hand. The many waving tentacles of a hydra were making hazy shadows in the water as they passed through light that was pouring down from above, from above the water, higher up. It was very bright. He wanted to see the light. He needed air; so he floated up to the top and the green leaves.

A frog sat on a lily pad and stuck out its soft, sticky tongue suddenly; so he grabbed it with one hand and a dragon fly with the other and gave the frog a dragon fly. The frog swallowed it and smiled. The thick mud that he swam to and crawled in sucked at his feet. It was full of worms, segmented worms, that slithered over his toes. One wound up to his mouth, and he was going to bite it even though it was wet, and shining, and a worm. But it was a grasshopper; and its face was almost human, like a man with his eyes turned up. It was horrible, too, because the feelers hanging from the side of its mouth were moving nervously and feeling his face. Eaten by a grasshopper—a grasshopper! Just grass and hop. He hopped.

Then he was in the air not far from the ground. His arms moved frantically, but he couldn't rise more than a foot above the surface. He looked at some tiny insects; and the tiny insects looked at him in astonishment and crawled on his back to get a free ride because he was bigger than they, and he knew all about them. He flew over to the jar and opened the top. The jar was green, and he curiously opened the top. Then he couldn't fly anymore; so he fell in. It was full of frog legs, big, muscular frog legs with arteries. He touched an artery and drew back. He touched it again and pulled it out of the muscle. It bled but he held on. It was green blood like the inside of a stomach. The jar was filled with green blood, and stomachs, and lungs, and intestines. He reached down and put his hand deep into the wet warmth and said, "Ish." But it wasn't anything because he was really reaching for his dissecting set. You had to have a dissecting set to know more, to see waving hydra, and sucking leeches, and delicate jellyfish, and slithering worms, and lovely coral, and intestines, and black pearls. You had to have a dissecting set.

Suddenly, the darkness and weakness rolled back, and he snapped on the light. It clicked loudly in all the silence, and the blue-bright light was on again. "You've got to start with a dissecting set." There was still the irritating odor of formaldehyde in the room, but it was cool now, and the faucet wasn't dripping.



## 104 LIBRARY

This new feature of the *Green Caldron* is a report of the Freshman Reading Committee, the chief function of which is to stock the Seven-day Book Room. The purpose here is to inform you about the room, to help you get your nose into the book which is the right one for you. Ordinarily a part of this space will be devoted to the announcement of volumes added to the room. Not all new books will be listed; however, the librarian will have a list of the new ones available at all times. No book will be reviewed or criticized here; contents may be briefly indicated or summarized. Frequently, as in the present issue, groups of books with a common center of interest will be pointed out. You can, by means of such groupings, focus your reading and thereby increase your enjoyment. Or, if you are in quest of variety, you can avoid such focusing by deliberate choice of books from varied categories.

Since this department is designed to be a mere service, the editors will like suggestions or queries about the best use of this space. What problems arise as you use the room? What information do you want? What are the shortcomings of the collection or of the service? You may pass along your queries, comments, suggestions, or howls through your instructor, or through the editor of the *Green Caldron*, 204-A Lincoln Hall.

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Under the heading of Popular Science you will discover a number of recent books (some of them are listed in the *Manual*) on popular aspects of military science. For example:

BRODIE, BERNARD, *A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy*

HOLMAN, GORDON, *Commando Attack*

ZIM, HERBERT S., *What a Citizen Should Know About Submarine Warfare*

JOHNSTON, STANLEY, *Queen of the Flat Tops*

SAUNDERS, H. ST. G., *Combined Operations: The Official Story of the Commandos*

STEINBECK, JOHN, *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team*

ZINSSER, HANS, *Rats, Lice, and History*

The last named will not outline campaigns for you; it should call your attention to the importance of the Medical Corps.

You need not feel that your hunger for military science can be satisfied only by books in this category. Some of the biographies of great commanders are perhaps as good meat for you:

BRADFORD, GAMALIEL, *Confederate Portraits*

CLINTON, D. J. (Thomas Rourke), *Man of Glory: Simon Bolivar*

LUDWIG, EMIL, *Bolivar: The Story of an Idealist*

LUDWIG, EMIL, *Napoleon*

JAMES, MARQUIS, *The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston*  
 HEDIN, SVEN, *Chiang Kai-Shek*  
 HERSEY, JOHN, *Men in Bataan*  
 MADARIAGA, SALVADOR DE, *Hernan Cortes, Conqueror of Mexico*  
 SANDOZ, MARI, *Crazy Horse*  
 THOMAS, LOWELL, *Count Luckner*

Think of any great military man; you will probably find a biography of him in Room 104.

Where from here? Into kindred areas of interest—Injun fighting, pioneering, international politics, current affairs, what would you? But before you go, consider a few novels which involve the military interest—as well as wider human interests. There are many of these among the older books. Among the recently purchased books:

ALLEN, HERVEY, *The Forest and the Fort*  
 CRANE, STEPHEN, *The Red Badge of Courage*  
 GILLIGAN, EDMUND, *The Gaunt Woman*  
 HEMINGWAY, ERNEST, *Farewell to Arms*  
 HEMINGWAY, ERNEST, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*  
 IBANEZ, VICENTE BLASCO DE, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*  
 SEGHERS, ANNA, *The Seventh Cross*  
 CANNON, LEGRAND, *Look to the Mountain*

These books, several of which are by no means hot off the press, introduce such assorted wars as the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I, the late tiff in Spain, and World War II. If you are fed up with this sort of thing for the present, use the list as a guide to what not to read, and hope for comment on the kind of book you do like in the next *Green Caldron*.

## Rhet as Writ

My feet just didn't want to go where I wanted them to go. However I soon broke them and from then on it was very simple.

. . . .

The fact that man can "get out and around" in the world is his greatest advantage over the goldfish.

. . . .

Do animals think? This question can only be answered in the mere opinion of a person's mind.

. . . .

My first reference was *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* in which I found a quotation from Congreve's *Ibid*.

Every three minutes the train would screech to a stop, drop off some farmer's wife and thirteen children at their front door, and sit on its haunches and pant a while.

. . . .

I don't like women in uniform, because I am afraid that they will become too independent and cut many men off from marriages, jobs, and other essential things.

. . . .

According to the Bible, each man was created equal.

. . . .

The sucking sound of the bog holes makes one think of some sinister beast stocking his prey. Now and then an erie quiet settles over the swamp. Then the silence is broken by the sliver of some slimy reptile as it slinks along over the scummy mire after its helpless victim.

. . . .

This fact is stated in view of that Tokio is an island surrounded by bodies of water on each side.

. . . .

If a woman has an attractive build she will always choose the certain types of clothes which subtly shows her assets to the best advantage.

. . . .

In the running of races, especially short races, starting is one of the most vital assets for the winning of the race.

. . . .

First (in learning to dance) I was afraid of the teacher, later she became a very good friend of mine, but most of all the slippery floor.

. . . .

When one of the soldiers asks us for a date, we should accept it in the spirit in which it is offered. Every girl with the average amount of intelligence and discrepancy can judge's a man's sincerity in this request.

. . . .

Every generation brings in a new language of its own and as a rule dies out with the people.





